

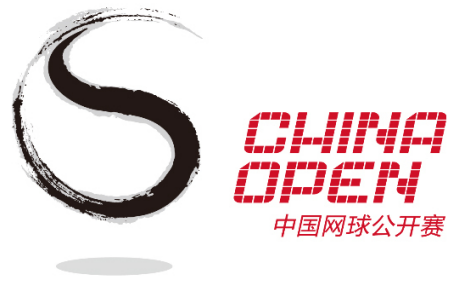
China Open

Thursday, October 5, 2023

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/V. Kudermetova

7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: What did you do well today to get past Veronika?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, she was playing really great tennis. I played her in Stuttgart. Even though the scoreline was split sets, I think that today the level she brought was much better. I think this was so far the best I've played this week in Beijing.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What do you think explains the difference in performance or the difference in the way the two sets went? Looked a lot more comfortable in the second set there.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I started off early up a break. I guess a returner like her, a break means a lot, but it doesn't mean that much. So I was really just trying to push through.

Honestly at 5-4, Love-40, I don't even know what happened. I mean, I know I hit, like, two good returns and I think she double-faulted. But fighting for every point.

I think obviously winning that first set, I think she was probably maybe a little bit frustrated so she gave me a little bit more errors. I don't think I really changed much in the second. I think I was trying to continue to be aggressive.

Q. These two matches that you've played here have been tough. The first set here as well. How different do you feel in those tight moments where it looks like the match could break away from you and how much of it is just the confidence of knowing that you can pull it out, and how much of it is, I don't know, I have a slam, I'm good, not having as much pressure?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, honestly I've been saying, like, the end of this season for me, especially once you're qualified,

I consider it bonus matches. That's why the first two matches I think I was disappointed in the way that I was playing. I think I was playing a little bit more tight, not going for my shots, not going for my serve. Today I was telling myself try to hit above 110, 115 as much as I could, be more aggressive.

I think for me in the long run, especially where it's tough to do it, but I feel like now that the pressure is off, now that the Grand Slam season is over and I'm qualified, I think this could be a good week to continue to work on things I need to work on.

Today I think I approached the match like that. I wish I did it earlier (smiling).

Q. Do you feel more confident in these matches that you've played here in Beijing, given everything that happened in September? At the start the tournament you said you don't feel any different. In those moments, are you feeling different?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, yeah, I do think I feel more confident. I think having that win makes you more confident in these moments. Especially the way the US Open went for me, a lot of three-set matches, a lot of tough moments.

I think it's way more pressure in the Grand Slam than a 1000, even though there's still pressure, but it's just less. I think I'm able to handle these emotions more because of that experience.

Honestly, I do feel more confident stepping on court. Plus the way I kind of started on the scene, a lot of people wanted that for me and expected that from me. I feel like now it's a little bit of a weight lifted and I'm able to play more freer, focus on the long-term and how to be able to set myself up to win even more.

Q. Could you explain more about the role Brad plays in your team?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think he obviously has a lot of experience in the game. I feel like he knows the things to



say in the tough moments in the match sometimes.

We have two different personalities. Brad, he likes to say a lot. I'm more someone who can be stubborn in a way. I think being with him has allowed me to open my mind up to accept advice more. I don't know, just the way he says it makes you want to do it.

The way that him and Pere work, honestly I don't know how they work together, but obviously they do well. They communicate a lot when I'm not there.

I think the biggest thing I feel like they've done well is both of their messages have always been the same, so I know they probably talk a lot, not in front of me, before they come to me with a game plan or a new idea or something that I need to work on. I feel like the whole team is communicating well and we're all on the same page.

Sometimes when you have two coaches, one as a coach, one as a consultant, sometimes things can be left and right or black and white. I think they've been working well together to kind of meet in the middle and help me prepare best for my matches.

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